

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ARTICLES DEALING WITH
THE CORE PROGRAM IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

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INTRODUCTION

The junior high school was originally founded to meet the need of education on an intermediate level between elementary school and high school. Since the purpose of the junior high school is to provide a program of transition between the child-centered elementary school and the subject-centered high school, there has been considerable concern over the type of curriculum which will serve best the junior high school's purpose. Educators, as a group responsible for the formal education of America's youth, have directed their efforts toward determining which type of curriculum can serve best the purposes of the junior high school since there are many problems of early adolescence with which neither the elementary school nor the senior high school can cope adequately.

Within recent years a considerable amount of discussion has been devoted to a type of curriculum organization known as the core-curriculum which, in the opinion of curriculum authorities such as Alberty, Faunce, and Bossing, will serve best in providing a desirable program of transition for junior high school students. It was with this view in mind that attention in this study was centered upon the core curriculum in the junior high school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this report was to analyze selected articles dealing with the core program in the junior high school with

regard to the following areas: (1) development and general characteristics; (2) status and trends; (3) core practices; (4) education for core teaching; and (5) evaluation of the core program.

Methods of the Study

To begin this study, a bibliography concerned with core programs, published by the U. S. Office of Education,¹ was employed to identify the pertinent literature contained in the Kansas State University library. A review of this literature revealed that a large number of articles and reports on the core program have been written. With few exceptions, the available articles selected for analysis were recent publications dating between the years 1956 to 1960.

DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

In order to achieve a sound program of general education to meet the needs of students at the junior high school level, school personnel have made a series of changes in moving away from the "required" subjects idea to the core. Harold Alberty presents the steps in the evolution:

(1) Required subject-matter fields of knowledge comprised the core, taught in regular course sequence ("constant" subjects).

(2) The regular subject-matter fields, some of which have close relationships to others and are

¹Grace S. Wright, The Core Program: One Hundred Selected References, 1956-1960, pp. 1-18.

consciously correlated (correlation in teaching).

(3) A core from the required subject-matter fields organized around units of work, larger problems, or central themes (correlation in teaching).

(4) A core around fusion or unifying of fields of knowledge that are closely interrelated (teaching by fusion with one subject area, e.g. the Social Studies, as the unifying center).

(5) A core around "broad-fields" of knowledge or preplanned problem areas ("broad-fields" approach to teaching centered around learning experiences in terms of life problems and needs of students).

(6) Broad teaching units around centers of interest, planned by the teacher and pupils cooperatively in terms of the needs of the group ("core" work).¹

The effort to maintain the separateness of one subject from another but at the same time to show some interrelationship between certain subjects can be seen in the first cautious attempts to modify the rigid subject-centered curriculum.² In the first attempts at correlation in teaching, a history teacher whose class was studying New England colonization might arrange with the literature teacher who had in her class many of the pupils in the history class to study literary accounts of life in this pioneer period. A difficulty encountered in the correlated curriculum was that of obtaining the necessary cooperation between subject-matter specialists in planning and working together. In addition the problem of breaking down rigid subject-matter lines was quite apparent.

¹Harold Alberty, 52nd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, pp. 118-40.

²Roland C. Faunce and Nelson L. Bossing, Developing the Core Curriculum, p. 43.

The next step in the evolution of the core consisted of unit teaching which utilized the required subject-matter fields to organize work on problems or central themes. This approach led to a radically different organization and use of subject matter. Subject matter became a means to the solution of a problem rather than an end in itself.¹

It is not surprising the unit-teaching approach led to the next step in the evolution of the core, namely; fusion. Fusion was "an attempt to merge two or three subjects into one"² and the use of problems became the fusing agent. Gwynn points out that there are two additional requirements essential for real fusion: (1) the course must involve a double period; and (2) the same group of students must meet with the same teacher for that period.³

The relationship of the fused curriculum to the core is noted by Gwynn:

...attempts at fused curricula have usually been centered on subject matter, not on the experiences of children...When actually centered around pupil experiences, the fused naturally evolves into the core curriculum on the secondary level...⁴

The "broad-fields" approach to teaching is generally considered an expanded form of the fusion idea.⁵ However, rather

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Ibid., p. 43.

³J. Minor Gwynn, Curriculum Principles and Social Trends, p. 410.

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Faunce and Bossing, op. cit., p. 44.

than bringing together the content of two or more subjects into one unified course, the "broad-fields" approach recombined many courses into one broad course.

The Curriculum Committee of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools made one of the earliest attempts to develop a broad-fields curriculum pattern. Four areas into which the usual subjects of the curriculum could be organized were suggested by this committee, including:

- (1) health and physical fitness
- (2) leisure time
- (3) vocational activities
- (4) social relationships¹

A more typical pattern to the broad-fields approach has been:

- (1) language arts
- (2) social studies
- (3) science and math
- (4) health and physical education
- (5) fine arts and music²

The "unified studies" course is another type of the broad-fields approach which has paved the way for the core curriculum in many secondary schools. Three characteristics of the unified studies program merit attention: (1) broad subject areas fused together are utilized in an integrated approach to learning;

¹Ibid., p. 45.

²Faunce and Bossing, Loc. cit.

(2) a block of time is set aside; and (3) teachers employed are trained in these areas or a committee of subject specialists work in close cooperation.¹

Although seemingly quite similar in their approach, according to Alberty, two significant differences can be noted between the broad-fields concept and the core concept.² Whereas the former is composed of learning experiences in terms of life problems and needs of students; the latter is composed of units centered around the interests and needs of the particular group. Secondly, the activities of a "core" class are those which have been planned cooperatively by teacher and students; in the "broad-fields" class, work is preplanned by the teacher.

While curricula based on correlation, fusion, and broad-field approaches have served as significant steps in the evolving core, at the same time these terms have served to bring about much confusion as to the meaning of core.

"Unified studies", "multiple periods", "block of time", "fused course", "correlated course", are regarded in many instances as synonyms of core. Faunce and Bossing point out four reasons for the confusion of these terms with "true-core".

(1) Such deviations from the older single-subject curriculum pattern usually involve a double class period and employ a single teacher; hence a superficial identification of such courses with core.

¹Loc. cit.

²Harold Alberty, "A Sound Core Program--What It Is and What It Isn't," National Education Association Journal, January 1956, 45:21.

(2) The failure to understand fundamental differences in the conception of learning differentiating the subject curriculum from the core curriculum, e.g. the former relied upon the commitment to memory of large blocks of information; the latter is based upon the theory that "learning consists of essentially the modification of the behavior patterns of the learner which results from his learning experiences".

(3) The term "core" has undergone a change of meaning; at one time "core" designated those courses "required" for graduation and such a definition has been carried over to the modern day.

(4) The long transition period needed to make a complete changeover from the subject curriculum to the core curriculum may induce some administrators to term curricula "core" although courses thus described are essentially intermediate states in the transition.¹

First used on a broad scale in the early thirties, the term "core" is at best a difficult word to define. The Tentative Course of Study for the Core Curriculum of Virginia Secondary Schools prepared by the Virginia State Board of Education in 1934 designated core as "an integrated program of education based upon the social functions procedure in curriculum development".²

As used in the 8-Year Study, the term "core" described courses based upon common needs or problems of adolescents, as well as correlated or fused courses.³

Writers on the educational scene today vary considerably as to what specific criteria determines whether or not a curriculum offering may be considered a part of the core concept. Wright

¹Faunce and Bossing, op. cit., pp. 65-67.

²Harold Alberty, "Core Programs", Encyclopedia of Educational Research, p. 338.

³Ibid., p. 339.

makes a distinction between the "true-core" and "core-type" offerings.

According to Wright, curriculum offerings meeting the criteria for true-core have the following characteristics:

- (1) Subjects are brought in only as needed.
- (2) Work consists of a number of broad preplanned problems usually related to a central theme.
- (3) Problems are based on predetermined areas of pupil needs, both immediate felt needs and needs as society sees them.
- (4) Members of the class may or may not select problems upon which they wish to work.¹

Wright differentiates between the core-type and true-core offerings in two ways. First, each subject may retain its own identity in the core-type offering. In this instance, subjects combined in the core may be correlated but are not fused. Secondly, subject lines may be broken down and still not meet the criteria cited above to warrant classification as a true-core offering.²

The two major requirements common to the modern concept of core in Alberty's opinion are: (1) providing experiences needed by all youth; and (2) providing experiences that cut across subject lines.³ In addition, Alberty offers the following as principal characteristics of an effective core program based on

¹Grace S. Wright, Block-Time Classes and the Core Program in the Junior High School, U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1958, No. 6, p. ix.

²Loc. cit.

³Harold Alberty, op. cit., National Education Association Journal, January 1956, 45:20.

adolescent needs:

(1) The core deals with the area of general education and hence is directed primarily toward the development of the common values, understandings, and skills needed for effective democratic citizenship.

(2) Since it provides for general education, it is required of all students at any given level.

(3) It utilizes a block of time sufficiently large to deal with a broad, comprehensive unit of work, with homeroom and guidance activities, and with individualized instruction.

(4) It is based upon the common problems, needs, and interests of youth as ascertained by the teaching staff and the core teacher in cooperation with his students. It draws freely upon all pertinent resources, including logically organized subjects or fields of knowledge.

(5) It has a clearly defined but flexible scope and sequence based on preplanned problem areas derived from the major values of democratic living and the common problems, needs, and interests of students.

(6) Instruction is based upon learning units derived principally from the established problem areas which are planned, carried forward, and evaluated by the teacher and the students.

(7) It is supported and reinforced by a rich offering of special interest activities--both formal and informal--designed to meet the particular needs of students and to develop their unique capacities, interests, and talents.¹

Since it is the consensus of most educators that general education is a major function of the junior high school, the core concept holds a unique position in the junior high school curriculum for as it can be noted, Faunce, Bossing, Wright, and Alberty are all in agreement that the core is composed of type-problem-learning experiences to which all pupils should be

¹Loc. cit.

exposed: hence, the core is a method for achieving general education.

STATUS AND TRENDS

Several status studies have been made to determine the extent of the introduction of the core idea into school practice. In this regard, Wright, in 1958, completed a study concerned with the status of block-time courses in the junior high school.¹ Earlier studies by Wright treating core program in general, rather than being related specifically to the junior high school core program, were completed in 1949² and in 1952.³

Whereas major attention in this section was given to the 1958 study, certain findings of the two earlier studies were presented which were significant in regard to the status of block-time programs in the junior high school.

The 1949 study by Wright employed a questionnaire to determine offerings and enrollments in high school subjects of 13,816 public high schools. A review of this 1949 study revealed that in the questionnaire, only one item was included seeking information about core-type courses, i.e. name of course; area of

¹Grace S. Wright, Block-Time Class and the Core Program In the Junior High School, U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1958, No. 6.

²Grace S. Wright, Core Curriculum in Public High Schools: An Inquiry Into Practices, 1949, U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1950, No. 5.

³Grace S. Wright, Core Curriculum Development: Problems and Practices, U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1952, No. 5.

learning of core subjects or subject matter areas included, if fixed; grades offered; periods per week; and enrollment.

Courses to be reported as core were those which "involve the combination of two or more class periods from subjects that would ordinarily be taught separately."¹

From this study, Wright concluded that the core curriculum "is not commonly found in America's secondary schools."² Projecting her findings on a nation-wide basis, she concluded an estimated 833 schools, or 3.5 percent, out of approximately 24,000 schools had adopted the core curriculum. With the finding that 86 percent of the core programs were in the three junior high school grades, she concluded that the core is "typically a junior high school development."³ However, it should be noted only 9.7 percent of all junior high schools had block-time classes. Other findings of this study include the following:

(1) Although usually known as core, core courses were variously referred to as "common learnings", "general education", "unified studies", "integrated programs", "social living", "basic living", and "problems of living".

(2) The 545 schools reporting listed 1,119 different cores. Three-fourths of these cores enrolled all the pupils in the grades in which they reported, one-fourth were offered to but one or two classes in an experimental or trial basis, or in some schools, to classes of slow learners.

(3) The typical junior high school or undivided

¹Wright, op. cit., U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1950, No. 5, p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 28.

³Wright, loc. cit.

school did not offer a core in more than one or two of the three grades.

(4) More than nine-tenths, or 1,028 of the core reported, displaced English and social studies. Of these 215 incorporated one or more other subjects. Only 81, or 8.1 percent, did not include a combination of English and social studies in their content.

(5) The typical core class met 10 periods per week, 67.8 percent of those reported being in this category. Second most frequently found was the 15-period cores, accounting for 16.4 percent of the total number. Nearly half of the cores meeting for more than 10 periods a week were reported as two-subject combinations.¹

The purpose of the 1952 study by the U. S. Office of Education was to discover to what extent several of the commonly discussed characteristics of the core actually are found in practice.

To obtain this information, questionnaires were sent to the 545 schools which had previously responded to the questionnaire used in the 1949 study of core offerings and to other schools which core programs came to Wright's attention following the 1949 study. Data for the 1952 study therefore were obtained from 398 of the 545 schools studied in 1949 and an additional 121 schools, totaling 519 schools. It may be of interest to note that of the 147 schools in the 1949 study which did not provide useful questionnaire data, 74 said they had no core program and 73 failed to reply.

Since the 398 usable questionnaires returned from the original schools studied in 1949 comprised slightly more than 76

¹Wright, op. cit., U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1950, No. 5, pp. 2-14.

percent of the total number of replies included in this later study, no attempt has been made in a correlation of the two studies' findings with the exception of a comparison of the percentage of core programs found in the junior high school grades.

In an attempt to determine the actual practices of schools in regard to the commonly discussed characteristics, Wright divided the core into four types:

Type A--each subject retains its identity in the core; subjects are combined, but not fused.

Type B--subject lines are broken down, that is, subjects are fused into a unified whole around a central theme.

Type C--subjects are brought in only as needed. The core consists of a number of broad preplanned problems usually related to a central theme and are based on predetermined areas of pupil needs.

Type D--subjects are brought in only as needed as in Type C. However, no predetermined problem areas are studied, rather the pupils and teacher are free to select problems upon which they wish to work.¹

In the questionnaire, principals were asked to check each type if more than one type of core was used. A double check was to be placed beside the one which represented the most common practice.

Wright, in analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaires, subdivided the responses for each type into three categories, according to whether that type was used: (1) exclusively; (2) in some classes; or (3) in most classes. The findings according to types for the 519 schools reporting were

¹Wright, op. cit., U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1952, No. 5, p. 12.

as follows:¹

	<u>Type A</u>	<u>Type B</u>	<u>Type C</u>	<u>Type D</u>
Exclusively	31.6	15.6	11.4	2.7
In some classes	13.1	20.0	17.7	9.1
In most classes	8.9	7.3	8.7	1.7
Total percent	54.6	42.9	37.8	13.5

Categorizing types A and B as "core-type", but not "true-core", Wright found 96.5 percent of the returns received, or a total of 500 of the 519 schools studied, utilizing either type A or B cores in one or more classes. A total of 222 schools, or 42.8 percent of the returns received, reported C or D type-cores in one or more classes. The latter two types, C and D, Wright classified as "true-core".

The study also attempted to discover whether or not schools planned to change from the type of core then being used to another type. In this regard Wright found that when a change was indicated, it was in the direction of progress toward a more advanced type of core. For example, 77 schools reported they planned changes. Of these 77 planning changes, 26 having type A cores only were planning to change to type B; 36 then having predominantly type A or B, planned to change to type C, and 14 schools hoped to develop their programs to become type D.

Counting as one each grade in each school in which the core program was found, the 519 schools reported a total of 1,215 grades using the core curriculum. In the three years commonly

¹Ibid., p. 8.

found in the junior high school, i.e. seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, the number of grade levels utilizing the core curriculum totaled 1,024 or 84.2 percent of the total grade levels.

According to junior high grade levels, Wright found 401 of the 519 schools had core programs in grade seven, 355 in grade eight, and 268 schools having core programs in grade nine.

The 1952 study showed a lower percentage of core programs in the three junior high school grades than was found in the 1949 study, the percentages being 84.2 and 86 respectively. It still could be maintained that the core in 1952 was typically a junior high school development.

Recognizing that core programs were found more frequently in the junior than in senior high school grades, the U. S. Office of Education conducted a study in 1958 in an attempt to determine the status of block-time classes and the core program in the junior high school.

Schools included in the study were selected by a 25 percent random sample stratified by state and were limited to only the separately organized junior high schools and the junior high school grades which are a part of a 6-year secondary school, either divided or undivided between junior and senior high school.

A total of 3,013 questionnaires were mailed with 2,517 returns received. This study employed the two terms "block-time" and "core" which represented a deviation from the two earlier studies in which only the term "core" had been used. Nevertheless the 1958 study used virtually the same type of definition

as in previous studies, i.e.:

Block-time (including core and core-type) classes are those meeting for a block of time of two or more class periods, and combining or replacing two or more subjects that are required of all pupils and would ordinarily be taught separately.¹

Table 1. Number and percent of junior and junior-senior high schools reporting block-time classes.²

Type of school	:	Number of	:	Schools reporting	
	:	schools	:	block-time classes	
	:	returning	:		
	:	questionnaires	:	Number	Percent
Junior		947		297	31.4
Junior-senior		1,570		190	12.1
Total		2,517		487	19.3

It may be seen in Table 1 that Wright found block-time classes as defined in the study were scheduled in 19.3 percent of junior and junior-senior high schools. The table also shows that separately organized junior high schools accounted for 31.4 percent of the schools reporting block-time courses, and junior-senior high schools reported 12.1 percent.

Whereas the study conducted by the U. S. Office of Education in 1949 found 9.7 percent of all junior and junior-senior high schools having block-time classes, a sizable increase in the number of such classes is reflected in the 1958 study.

¹Wright, op. cit., U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1958, No. 6, p. ix.

²Ibid., p. 2.

Figure 1 contains a comparison of the percentages of junior and junior-senior high schools having block-time classes found in these two studies.

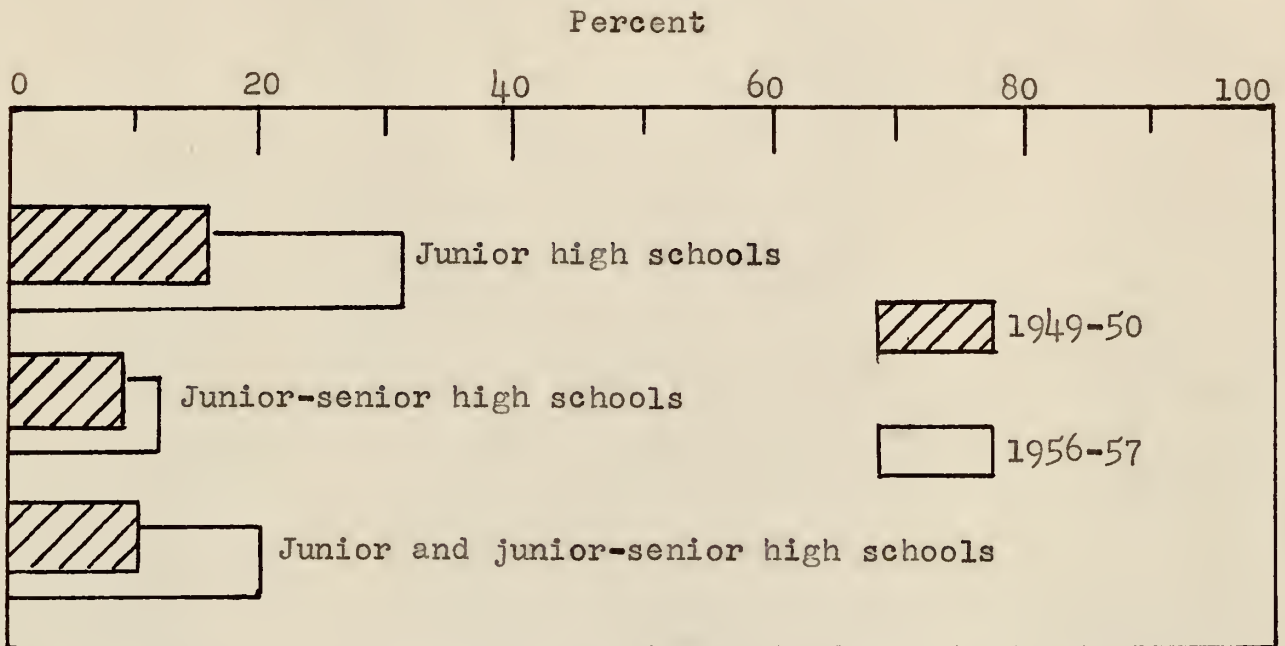


Figure 1. Percentage of junior and junior-senior high schools having block-time classes.¹

Wright's study further revealed that block-time classes were more frequently found in large schools than in small schools as shown in Table 2.

¹Ibid., p. 3.

Table 2. Number and percent of schools having block-time classes, by size of enrollment in grades 7-9.¹

Enrollment	:	Schools reporting block-time classes	
		Number	Percent
ALL SCHOOLS		487	19.3
Less than 200		83	7.0
200-499		131	18.5
500-999		165	40.0
1,000 and over		203	50.3

In addition, block-time classes were found more often in grade seven and least often in grade nine. In the seventh grade, 94 percent of the 487 schools reported block-time classes; in the eighth grade, 72 percent; and in the ninth grade, 26 percent.

Table 3. Number and percent of all pupils enrolled in block-time classes in schools reporting these data by grade.²

Grades	:	Schools reporting	:	Number of pupils in grade	:	Pupils enrolled in block-time classes	
						Number	Percent
7		441		96,221		88,354	91.8
8		444		97,663		65,070	66.6
9		351		78,221		24,523	31.4

¹Ibid., p. 6.

²Ibid., p. 7.

In Table 3, the number and percent of pupils enrolled in block-time classes in schools reporting that data by grade is shown. It can be seen from Table 3 that while a little over nine-tenths of the pupils are enrolled in block-time classes in the seventh grade, only two-thirds are enrolled in such classes in the eighth grade, and only one-third in the ninth grade. Since nearly one-fifth of the 487 schools reporting block-time classes failed to supply enrollment data, it was impossible to determine the percentage of all pupils enrolled in such a program.

Inasmuch as the definition of block-time classes in the 1958 study stipulated such classes combine or replace two or more subjects "required of all students", it might be expected that all students in a grade having block-time classes would be enrolled in them. However, a review of the data shows the following variations:

Extent of enrollment	Percent of 487 schools
All or nearly all pupils in the grades in which block-time classes are used	87
About one-half of such pupils	5
Less than one-fourth of such pupils; the program is experimental.	5
Proportion varies by grade, that is all pupils might be enrolled in grade 7, half in grade 8, and only a class or two in grade 9 ¹	3

While it was evident from the 1958 study that block-time practices were increasing, it was also apparent that some

¹Wright, loc. cit.

schools, previously employing block-time courses, had discontinued the practice. Thus an attempt was made in this study to ascertain reasons for schools abandoning block-time courses. In this regard, one item in the questionnaire was directed to principals reporting no block-time program in operation. Principals in this category were asked whether or not such a block-time program had ever been used in their schools. Those principals answering in the affirmative were asked to list the reasons for abandoning the program. From this data it was found that 130 schools in the sample of 2,517 had utilized some type of block-time program at one time but had discontinued it. Of these 130 schools, principals in 52 schools stated they were unable to secure teachers adequately prepared; 20 listed problems of scheduling; 20 reported the program was disliked by parents, pupils, and/or teachers; 14 felt they failed to get desired results from the program; 14 reported limitations of space and equipment; 3 stated not sufficient emphasis on subjects; and 7 failed to respond.¹

While the 1958 study showed progress in curriculum and general education development as evidenced by the increasing growth of block-time courses, it was still of great significance to discover what changes were taking place instructionally and curriculum-wise in block-time classes. In this regard, the 1958 study, as in the 1952 study, attempted to discover actual

¹Wright, op. cit., U. S. Office of Education Bulletin 1958, No. 6, pp. 7-8.

practices of schools in regard to the commonly discussed characteristics of the core program. Wright again divided the core into four types, i.e. A, B, C, and D. The descriptions of these four types of core in the 1958 study are the same as those employed in the 1952 study. This data revealed the following percentages according to types for the 487 schools reporting block-time classes:

Type A - 68 percent or 328 schools

Type B - 20 percent or 98 schools

Type C - 6 percent or 30 schools

Type D - 6 percent or 31 schools¹

Projecting these findings on a nation-wide basis, Wright concluded:

(1) An estimated total of 1,560 junior and junior-senior high schools may be said to have block-time classes fitting the definition for Type A.

(2) Approximately 460 junior and junior-senior high schools have Type B programs as the most common practice in their schools.

(3) Type C and D programs, or the "true-core", may be found in an estimated 280 junior and junior-senior high schools.²

The 1958 study further showed that 60 schools planned to change from one type of core to another type. Of the 60 schools planning changes, 55 then having Type A planned to change to B, C, or D; 5 having Type B planned to move to Type C or D; and no changes were planned in those schools reporting Type C or D programs.

¹Ibid., pp. 10-15.

²Wright, loc. cit.

Table 4. Subjects combined in block-time classes in grades 7, 8, and 9 in 487 schools in this study.¹

Subjects combined	Schools with block-time classes				
	Grades			All Grades	
	7	8	9	Number	Percent
All subject combinations					
English and social studies	313	265	102	680	72.0
English, social studies, and--					
Science	35	15	1	41	4.3
Mathematics	31	11	2	44	4.7
Science and mathematics	30	18	-	48	5.1
Science and mathematics	40	28	6	74	7.8
Social studies and mathematics	6	3	-	9	1.0
English and mathematics	5	2	1	8	.9
Social studies and science	8	3	3	14	1.5
English and science	7	4	-	11	1.2
Other groupings	6	6	3	15	1.5

Table 4 shows subjects combined in block-time classes in grades seven, eight, and nine for the 487 schools in the 1958 study. It may be seen from Table 4 that English and social studies is the most frequently found combination of subjects. The English-social studies combination accounts for 72 percent of the courses. General science, mathematics, or both, combined with English and social studies comprise an additional 14 percent of the courses.

From data relating to the length of the block-time classes, Wright found the typical block-time course meets for the same number of periods as the classes it replaces. Inasmuch as the

¹Ibid., p. 21.

typical block-time class replaces two subjects, it meets for ten periods a week. However, classes combining only English and social studies were reported to meet for fifteen periods weekly in 15 percent of the schools.

At the national level, the three studies made by Wright of the U. S. Office of Education comprise the most comprehensive studies of block-time classes and core curriculum. At the state level, there have been two recent studies of block-time practices covering secondary schools within Alabama and Minnesota which provide a basis of comparison with the national studies conducted by Wright.

Following Wright's 1956-57 nation-wide sampling study, Holloway, in 1957, completed a more extensive and thorough study¹ of Alabama's secondary school practices with regard to the scope, trends, and problems of core curriculum work in Alabama.

Holloway employed a questionnaire similar to Wright's in making the study. The same definition of block-time classes as used by Wright for her 1956-57 study was employed by Holloway. In addition he used the same criteria as Wright in differentiating the various type block-time classes into four categories, i.e. A, B, C, D. In the Alabama study, Holloway included all junior, junior-senior, and four-year high schools listed in the educational directory of Alabama that were not included in

¹Otto Holloway, "Scope, Trends, and Problems of Core Curriculum Work in Alabama," Educational Administration and Supervision, May 1959, 45:153-161.

Wright's sampling study.

From a 69 percent questionnaire return, Holloway found that 39, or 14.9 percent, of all schools reporting used block-time classes. Block-time classes were used in 13.4 percent of combined junior-senior high schools and in 8.3 percent of separate senior high schools.

A comparison of the Wright and Holloway studies revealed block-time courses using none or some correlation between subjects (Type A) to be respectively: 68 and 69.2 percents; 20 contrasted with 12.8 percent in those classes using fusion around central themes or problems (Type B); and 12 against 17.8 percent in those using a personal-social problems type content organization within the class (Types C and D).

In 1957, Bossing and Kaufman made a study¹ of block-time practices in all Minnesota secondary schools similar to that made by Holloway in Alabama. From a 97 percent questionnaire return, Bossing and Kaufman, with regard to the extent of use of block-time practices, found:

- (1) 14.4 percent of all schools reported the use of block-time classes;
- (2) 32.9 percent of junior high schools employed block-time practices;
- (3) 11.1 percent of combined junior and junior-senior high schools utilized the block-time program;
- (4) 15 percent of four-year high schools employed such a program;
- (5) 9.3 percent of senior high schools utilized the block-time approach.²

¹Nelson L. Bossing and John F. Kaufman, "Block-Time or Core Practices in Minnesota Secondary Schools," Clearing House, May 1958, 32:532-537.

²Ibid., p. 532.

The 1957 Minnesota study also found that 19 out of 60 schools responding used separate subjects with either none or some correlation between subjects (Type A); 7 said that subjects were unified around a central theme (Type B); 18 schools indicated their programs combined Types A and B; no school reported Type C being the only practice it used; 2 schools said units of work were drawn from the personal and social problems facing youth (Type D, or "true-core"); and 14 schools indicated their schools used a combination of two of the four types, with Type C or D mentioned as one of the types in the combination.¹

The 1957 Minnesota study further showed that 20 principals out of 58 responding, or 34 percent, indicated they planned to change to Types C and D either individually or in some combination. Only 9 schools, or 16 percent, stated they planned to use Type A; and 12 schools, or 21 percent, planned to use Type B. From this data it may be concluded that there is a definite trend in Minnesota in the direction of true-core.

From the studies made by Wright, Holloway, Bossing and Kaufman, it is evident there is a definite trend toward increased use of block-time programs and that this increase in use is most marked at the junior high school level. It is also clear that there is a slow, but marked shift away from the subject-centered curriculum in the direction of the problem-centered curriculum based upon the personal and social needs of youth. From these studies, it might be concluded that block-time

¹Ibid., pp. 533-535.

programs will become the dominant pattern of class organization in the junior high school of the future.

CORE PRACTICES

As evidenced by the review of the literature relative to core programs throughout the United States a variety of approaches to implementing such a program exists. Hence, it seems appropriate that a number of the core practices reviewed in this study be presented and discussed in some detail.

Plymouth, Michigan, Community Junior High School

Superintendent R. L. Isbister of the Plymouth, Michigan, Community Junior High School explains the block-time approach to teaching in his school which had designed a school building to facilitate such a program as follows:

Plymouth Community Junior High School was planned to meet the needs of students of this teenage group in their transition from the single teacher classroom of the elementary school to the diversity of teachers and classrooms of the senior high school. The usual classroom block has been broken up checkerboard fashion into "villages" so that to all purposes and intents students are housed in two room schools within a school.¹

In this particular school, a pair of classrooms, separated by a common conference room and an enclosed court, comprise the "villages" or teaching units. One teacher has charge of each classroom, but the two teachers in each teaching unit work as a team.

¹"Checkerboard Classrooms House Common Learning Program," Nation's Schools, December 1958, 6:54.

The block-time or "common learning" classes comprise four-sevenths of the total time students spend in school each day. In the common learning classes, the same students are taught by two teachers working as a team in the teaching unit. Hence, after spending two 48-minute periods devoted to social studies and language arts taught by one teacher, the same students pass to the second room in the unit and the second teacher is in charge of two 48-minute periods given to science and mathematics instruction. It should be noted that while in some instances the students may devote four consecutive periods to common learnings, in other instances students may attend specialized classes in the interim of the meetings of common learnings classes. For example, a student may spend the first two periods of the school day in a social studies-language arts block-class; spend the third period in art, home economics, music, or industrial arts; and then spend the fourth and fifth periods in a science-mathematics block.

It is interesting to note that the common learnings teachers in the Plymouth Community Junior High not only have a class of students for 96 minutes daily, but the second team member of the pair also has the same students for 96 minutes. Two advantages seemingly accrue from such a program, namely: (1) teachers have the opportunity to know their students more intimately; and (2) since the team members teach the same students, an opportunity is provided for those teachers comprising a team to compare notes on the same student problem.

Although the block-time program at Plymouth Community

Junior High could not be considered true-core, the program attempts to provide the setting for developing a better correlation of common subject areas. Subjects within the two-period block are taught separately, i.e. one hour devoted to English; the second hour devoted to social studies. The subjects are not fused around central themes or problems.

Two factors are evident in the school utilizing both the block-time approach to teaching and a building designed specifically for the program:

(1) An integration of common subjects, achieved by joint planning of teachers, is facilitated by providing conference room between the classrooms comprising a teaching unit.

(2) Student counseling by classroom teachers is facilitated when the length of the class period (in this case, 96 minutes) is increased sufficiently to give teachers an opportunity to become acquainted with their students.¹

Shawnee Mission District Schools

In the Shawnee Mission District Schools, Unified Studies is a required course for all junior high school pupils.² The Unified Study program was designed for the purpose of promoting and developing a democratic way of life. In this regard, planners, in setting up the block-time program, presented the following main objectives:

¹Ibid., p. 58.

²Ralph E. Chalender, "A Unified Studies Approach," Educational Leadership, December 1960, 18:162.

...To provide opportunity for the learner to have experience which will help him become sensitive to problems of common welfare in the family, the school, the community, and the nation; to teach him to work with others in the solution of these problems; to develop his feeling of individual responsibility for common welfare; to help him act in harmony with what he says and believes; to improve his individual skills; and to broaden his understanding of the physical and social world.¹

In order to achieve these objectives, a three hour block of time is devoted to social studies, language arts, and science in the seventh and eighth grades and a two hour block of time is given to social studies and language arts in the ninth grade.

Resource units, prepared by group of teachers from the elementary schools and some of the senior high school staff, are used by the teachers in the Shawnee Mission Junior High Schools. Each grade level has some resource units required. Those units required for the seventh grade include the following:

- (1) We Are the Junior High School
- (2) Let's Improve Our Communication With Others
- (3) How Do We Find Our Way About the World?
- (4) We Live In Many Communities
- (5) Living In Harmony With Myself and Others
- (6) What Is Science?
- (7) How Do Plants and Animals Grow?

In the eighth grade, required units include:

- (1) Looking Ahead
- (2) Let's Improve Our Communication With Others
- (3) How Did the United States Become a Nation?

¹Loc. cit.

- (4) Westward Expansion and the Civil War
- (5) How Do We Govern Ourselves In a Democracy?
- (6) How Did the United States Become the Greatest Producer of Goods In the World?
- (7) How Can We Conserve Natural Resources?

Required units for grade nine include the following:

- (1) Looking Ahead
- (2) Let's Improve Our Communication With Others
- (3) Careers
- (4) Interdependence In a Shrinking World
- (5) The United Nations
- (6) One or more of the following areas: Russia, South America, Africa, Western Europe, India, China

Teachers in the Shawnee Mission Junior High Schools consider the advantages of the Unified Studies program to be:

(1) Unified Studies activities are more likely than a separate-subject approach to teach social values and meanings.

(2) The Unified program provides more opportunities for learning through personal experience and through the use of a wide variety of materials.

(3) The opportunity to work with a variety of materials in a unit of work makes learning more concrete.

(4) The Unified program makes available a larger block of time for carrying out projects involving excursions and other realistic learning activities.¹

Weber, Utah, County Junior High Schools

The approach used by the Weber, Utah, County Junior High

¹Chalender, op. cit., p. 164.

Schools in implementing the core program may be divided into four general areas: (1) in-service training activities of teachers; (2) development of resource units; (3) measurement of pupil responses; and (4) teacher reaction and responses.¹

The in-service training activities of teachers included a workshop designed to help teachers understand some of the basic principles and practices of core teaching. In addition this workshop enabled teachers to become aware of some of the problems involved in initiating a core program in the junior high schools.

During the fall quarter, a weekly class, directed by an education professor from the University of Utah, was utilized to instruct teachers in the nature of group dynamics. Furthermore, this class developed an outline and basic framework for the type of core program to be introduced in the junior high schools of the district.

A second quarter class was devoted to outlining subject matter areas with the purpose of relating them to the core program and to the resource units to be developed.

The development of a pattern for successive resource units was accomplished by core teachers working with skillful personnel having experience and special training in counseling and orientation, language arts, and social studies. The specially trained personnel were particularly helpful in assisting with

¹Matthew F. Noall and Lerue Winget, "The Core Curriculum Project," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, January 1959, 43:196.

the development of behavioral goals and objects of the resource unit. A special two-week summer workshop was also utilized in completing the nine resource units to be used for the 1958-59 school year.

In an effort to ascertain the problems and needs of the youth in Weber County, the Mooney Problem Check List was administered to the students participating in the core program. From this problem inventory, the following block of five problem items presented in block form was found to be most prevalent:

- (1) afraid of failing in school
- (2) trouble with arithmetic
- (3) trouble with spelling or grammar
- (4) slow in reading
- (5) trouble with writing

The second most frequently found source of problems included:

- (1) not spending enough time in study
- (2) too much school work to do at home
- (3) can't keep my mind on my studies
- (4) worried about grades
- (5) not smart enough¹

This inventory revealed that the three most frequently checked sources of problems dealt with school relationships, problems of boy-girl relations, and family problems. Such a study is significant in the core program because such a problem inventory enables the teacher to identify the problems and needs of the students and incorporate these problems and needs into the core program.

The Weber County schools were interested in obtaining teacher reactions and responses to the core program in an effort

¹Ibid., p. 200.

to facilitate changes. From interviews and questionnaires, the Weber County schools found that teachers felt the theory and philosophy behind the program were sound; that such a program enabled them to understand their pupils better; and that they were becoming more conscious of pupils as individuals with the result that they were shifting the emphasis from the subject matter to the student. At the same time, teachers reported that a need did exist for movable desks to facilitate group work and there was a need for a greater variety and supply of teaching materials.¹

Stewart Junior High School, University of Utah

The Stewart Junior High School at the University of Utah inaugurated a new program in 1954 based upon the hypothesis that a further integration of the curriculum would offer a better organization for learning.² Prior to the inauguration of the new program, the school's curriculum was comprised of an English-social studies core and conventional subject offerings in mathematics, science, industrial arts, music, art, physical education, home economics, and an activities program.

Recognizing the values of the core program, (development of common understandings, skills, values for democratic citizenship; provision for individual differences; guidance opportunities,

¹Ibid., p. 202.

²Earl W. Harmer, "A New Program in Junior High School," Educational Leadership, May 1960, 17:509-511.

etc.) the Stewart school staff hoped to achieve a more integrated curriculum which moved beyond the "core plus conventional subjects" organization. Hence, it seemed that possibilities for improving the curriculum lay with the special-interest areas.

The proposed program for reorganization of curriculum as suggested by the Stewart staff in curriculum workshops included the following:

(1) The core program would remain as it had been organized, i.e. the various grade levels would remain intact. There would be a large block of time available for work. The core would consist of a fusion of English and social studies. The general method would continue to be unit teaching.

(2) All of the special interest areas of the curriculum--art, music, home economics, industrial arts, clubs--would consist of six and twelve week predetermined units of work. Students would have a variety of choice and be able to cross over into other grades; e.g. a unit of work in art, "Landscapes", might draw students from the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades.

(3) The science and mathematics programs would consist of predetermined units and students would not observe grade lines. Algebra was to remain a full year sequence, primarily for ninth graders; and some science units, e.g., "Reproduction" would be restricted to ninth graders.

(4) Units in physical education and health would be required of all students. Again students could cross grade lines, but units of work would not be as definitely predetermined.¹

Initially this reorganized program required careful pre-planning by teachers and time was devoted to preliminary pre-school scheduling conferences. However, once the problems of scheduling were ironed out, the "unit-plan with no grade lines"

¹Ibid., p. 509.

offered a practicable program geared to the needs, problems, and interests of each student. Opportunities for individualizing instruction were facilitated by the varied study areas and the elimination of grade lines. The value of such a program is evidenced by the fact that pupils made outstanding gains in science and social studies learnings.

The advantages of an integrated program, as found by the Stewart Junior High School staff include the following:

(1) Offers a wide variety of study areas; increases the exploratory opportunities for students.

(2) Improves learnings in fundamental knowledge and skills.

(3) Offers greater opportunities for problem solving and develops critical thinking.

(4) Makes better provision for individual differences.

(5) Improves guidance services of the school.

(6) Offers increased opportunities for personal and social development through broad contact with all junior high school pupils and teachers.

(7) Promotes greater sensitivity and understandings of social conditions and problems.

(8) Promotes greater understanding of personal competencies, characteristics, and potentials.¹

EDUCATION FOR CORE TEACHING

Review of the pertinent literature further reveals that within the past five years few articles pertaining to education for core teaching have appeared on the educational scene. As

¹Ibid., p. 511.

evidenced by the fact that Wright in her 1956-57 study found 52 of 130 schools abandoning block-time programs due to an inability to secure adequately prepared teachers, there is a need for further research in the area of education for core teaching.

Attention in this study will be given to a discussion of the competencies needed by all effective core teachers and to the pre-service and in-service education needed to achieve these competencies as presented by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Whether or not a teacher planning to teach core for the first time is just out of college or has had years of experience, according to a recent Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development monograph, there are five areas in which the core teacher must develop competency, including:

- (1) Understanding the adolescent and helping meet his needs.

- (2) Using major fields of knowledge as resources for studying and solving common problems.

- (3) Providing leadership in the use of democratic group processes.

- (4) Counseling and guidance.

- (5) Organizing and utilizing learning materials.¹

Because the core teacher is generally more interested in "what the subject does to the learner" than in "what the learner does to the subject,"² the core teacher should seek to develop

¹Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Preparation of Core Teachers, 1955, p. 21.

²Ibid., p. 23.

the following abilities with regard to the area of understanding the adolescent and meeting his needs:

(1) Ability to provide activities and learning opportunities in which pupils are encouraged to affiliate with each other, both for solving mutual problems and for having fun together.

(2) Ability to make some measure of approval and success possible for every learner.

(3) Ability to provide pupils with constructive means of releasing aggressions.

(4) Ability to sense developmental levels of adolescents and to gear experiences to these levels.

(5) Ability to begin with the immediate and concrete in the learner's present world and to help him develop from them patterns of generalizations.

(6) Ability to help adolescents identify their problems and to gear learning to real (individual) purposes.¹

In the core class, many processes are utilized in an effort to make learning more meaningful. Some of these processes include: speaking, writing, listening, discussion, construction of panels, dramatics, drawing, and singing. Hence, an effective core teacher must be able to draw upon major fields of knowledge as resources for studying and solving common problems. In order to do this, the core teacher needs the following competencies:

(1) General knowledge of such fields as history, literature, natural science, economics, sociology, government.

(2) Ability to identify major current social, economic, and political problems or issues.

(3) Ability to draw upon and use major fields of knowledge in solution of current problems.

¹Ibid., pp. 23-24.

(4) Ability to relate various fields of knowledge to a problem area.

(5) Ability to locate materials, persons, place, and other resources useful in helping solve current problems.

(6) Ability to organize resources in effective form for later use.¹

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the core program is its use of group problem-solving techniques. In this regard a teacher should seek to develop the following understandings of democratic group processes:

(1) He must be able to help the class achieve the level of rapport and mutual respect needed for effective group planning.

(2) He must be able to give the class some orientation to the planning process, and a reasonable degree of security in using it.

(3) He must be able to help the class to formulate and adopt clearly stated goals for its work, for any given unit and for longer range objectives.

(4) He must be able to help the class conduct a problem census, explore the possible problem areas, and achieve consensus in the selection of areas for study.

(5) He must be able to help groups organize for effective work, to choose leaders, develop a plan of work, define a problem, set up hypotheses to be tested, secure resources, keep records, formulate conclusions, evaluate results.

(6) He must be able to help the class to evaluate its growth in relation to the various skills, concepts, understandings and knowledge which may be established as its goals.

(7) He must be able to help the class to learn and use techniques of self- and group control.²

¹Ibid., p. 26.

²Ibid., p. 28.

Helping students solve their personal and social problems, both as a group and individually, is an integral part of the core class experience. Hence, the effective core teacher must have certain skills in counseling and guidance, including:

(1) Ability to listen, "to draw out" the pupil, to help him formulate his own conclusions and make his own decisions.

(2) Ability to make suggestions without either dominating the interview or putting words in the pupil's mouth.

(3) Ability to wait patiently for results.

(4) Ability to accept all youth warmly, without condoning their every act.

(5) Ability to structure opportunities in a classroom in such ways as to build up and strengthen personality.

(6) Ability to interpret data from tests and other sources that help in understanding students.

(7) Ability to identify and to help restructure group relationships.

(8) Ability to help students locate information about school, college, and jobs.

(9) Ability to help members of a group assume responsibility for their own (disciplinary) control.¹

The task of organizing and utilizing learning materials is of prime importance in the core class where a variety of materials serve as resources in problem solving. The fact that such materials generally are not organized in a form readily usable for core classes, further suggests competencies needed by an effective core teacher, including:

(1) Broad knowledge of several subject fields that have a bearing on contemporary problems.

¹Ibid., p. 31.

(2) Knowledge of the community and its personal--and place--resources.

(3) Knowledge of sources of free and inexpensive materials.

(4) Ability to select and organize materials around broad problems of current concern.

(5) Ability to identify, without salesmanship or compulsion, the actual problems or concerns of adolescents.

(6) Ability to gauge student interest, reading power, and developmental levels in selection of materials.

(7) Ability to devise varied possible opportunities for experiences that will enable students to utilize resources.

(8) Ability to work cooperatively with administrators, librarians, fellow teachers, and local citizens in developing resource materials.¹

In an effort to prepare competent core teachers, some colleges and universities have developed programs specifically designed for the preparation of core teachers. In 1950, only three or four such programs could be found in colleges and universities in the United States.² By 1955, the number of programs for core teaching had risen to eight.³ Faunce and Bossing cite certain common trends appearing in the more recent college programs designed for teacher education of core:

(1) The programs generally emphasize the objective of broad preparation in a number of subject fields, as opposed to intensive specialization in one field.

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Faunce and Bossing, op. cit., p. 251

³Loc. cit.

(2) They tend to emphasize skills in guidance and in group problem solving.

(3) They seek to reveal to the prospective core teacher the relationship of the various subject fields as they are used in solution of current problems.

(4) They usually provide early and systematic practice teaching experiences in core classes in secondary schools.¹

For the purpose of this study, three institutions were selected for an analysis of their specific programs designed for core teacher preparation. The three schools selected include: College of Education, University of Minnesota; Department of Education, Ohio State University; and Teacher College, Columbia University.

As reported by Bossing in the 1955 A.S.C.D. monograph,² the College of Education of the University of Minnesota appointed a committee in 1946 to explore and recommend a plan for the preparation of teachers for core curriculum programs. The committee presented six major qualifications for the prospective core teacher, including:

(1) Superior intellectual ability.

(2) Superior social and personality qualifications.

(3) Genuine interest in children and youth.

(4) Broad background of understanding of our culture in a world setting.

(5) Understanding of the genetic nature of the biological, psychological, and social development of the children and youth.

¹Faunce and Bossing, op. cit., p. 252.

²A.S.C.D., op. cit., pp. 52-54.

(6) Understanding of and skill in the democratic process.¹

The College of Education assumed the first three above qualifications should be present in marked degree at the time of admittance to the core curriculum program. In this regard, each prospective core teacher had to undergo testing, interviews, and checking before being admitted.

From the resources available within the university-wide curriculum, the College of Education developed a core major made up of carefully selected specified courses. With regard to providing the prospective core teacher extended experiences in the principal areas of the culture, certain minimum requirements were set in the following broad fields: communications, humanities, social sciences, family life, music, art, psychology, physical education, and public health. Courses required in these fields comprised more than half the credits necessary for graduation. In addition, each core teacher was required to prepare in a minor in one traditional subject field.

A total of 186 hours is required by the College of Education for graduation in the core preparation program. Of these 186 hours, 35 hours represent professional courses taken in the College of Education. In addition to regular education courses, a seminar designed specifically for the prospective core teachers is conducted once a week. A special course in teaching methods for core is provided and students do their practice

¹Ibid., p. 52.

teaching in core classes in the public schools of the Twin Cities or in the University High School. Bossing surveys this plan of teacher education at the University of Minnesota as:

...an obvious compromise with the realities of existing conditions both as regards the resources of background education found in the university and with respect to the practical needs of those who will teach in schools where old and new educational processes are simultaneously in vogue.¹

The Ohio State University Department of Education has developed a program for preparing core teachers on the graduate level.² Leading to either the Master of Art or the Master of Education degree, the program provides for basic work in the major areas of knowledge used in the core programs and provisions are made for acquiring professional competencies essential in the core field. There are three types of courses included in the Ohio State University program: (1) required subject matter courses; (2) required professional courses; and (3) elective professional courses.

In regard to the subject matter courses required, each student must select fifteen quarter hours from pertinent subject fields, such as language arts, social studies, mathematics, the sciences, etc. This requirement is an attempt to strengthen and broaden the prospective core teacher's preparation in one or more of the major fields of knowledge commonly used in core.

Eighteen to twenty-one quarter hours are devoted to required professional courses in the program for preparing core

¹Ibid., p. 54.

²Ibid., pp. 57-59.

teachers at Ohio State University. The professional courses required are designed to help the prospective core teacher acquire and develop the basic professional competencies needed in core teaching.

The third type of courses included in the program for preparation of core teachers at Ohio State University is the elective professional courses. These courses comprise 15 to 20 quarter hours and are selected from a wide range of courses in such fields as: audio-visual education, art education, music education, vocational education, philosophy of education, social education, library, psychology, guidance, history of education, and methods of teaching courses in the various fields.

Columbia University's Teachers College pre-service preparation of core teachers is similar to that of Ohio State University in that it also leads to a master's degree. Requirements for admittance to Columbia University's program include:

- (1) meeting the general admissions requirements to Teachers College
- (2) holding a bachelor's degree
- (3) having an undergraduate major in English, social science, or science
- (4) having an undergraduate minor in English, social science, or science¹

Preference for admission to the program for preparation of core teachers is given to those students who possess one or more of the following qualifications:

¹Ibid., p. 65.

(1) A broad undergraduate program of general education, including the social studies, the arts, the humanities, and the natural sciences.

(2) Nonschool experiences which indicate an interest in art, music, literature, home and family living, health, or social and civic activities.

(3) Experience as leader in such activities as scouting, camping, or adolescent club work.

(4) Varied work experience and travel in this country and abroad.¹

The program of instruction consists of four phases, including: (1) curriculum and teaching; (2) foundations of education; (3) guidance, and (4) electives.

There are two major courses in curriculum and teaching which serve as the integrating and coordinating center of the program. The first is a seminar in core teaching and the second provides student teaching in core classes. The seminar has the following main objectives:

(1) To aid the prospective core teacher in building up his own general education and utilizing it as fully as possible in helping youth meet their common needs and solve their common problems.

(2) To familiarize prospective teachers with the literature in the field of general education and to help them utilize this in their own work.

(3) To guide prospective teachers in evaluating existing core courses and in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the various types of core courses.

(4) To guide the prospective teacher in understanding how people learn and utilizing this understanding in guiding, directing, and evaluating experiences of youth. This includes the identification of problems, needs, interests, and concerns, and the development of appropriate teaching plans.

¹A.S.C.D., loc. cit.

(5) To help prospective teachers to foster sound mental health in their core teaching.

(6) To aid prospective teachers in dealing effectively in core courses with controversial issues which students encounter in school, home, and community.

(7) To aid prospective teachers in utilizing the resources of the community in dealing with individual and group problems and in fostering occupational orientation.

(8) To help the prospective teacher to utilize audio-visual and printed materials.

(9) To aid the prospective teacher in utilizing and directing various types of student extraclass activities and relating these to the core course.

(10) To aid prospective teachers in utilizing the learnings from other courses in the professional sequence.

(11) To aid prospective teachers in dealing effectively with the problems encountered in their student teaching.

(12) To aid the prospective teachers in functioning effectively as members of a staff in curriculum improvement activities, contacts with parents, and in general public relations.¹

The second course in the area of curriculum and teaching is closely related to the seminar and serves as a laboratory or experience center for it. Students in this course devote one-half of each school day during two semesters to daily participation and teaching in a two- or three-hour core course in New York City or the surrounding area. In addition students are expected to devote time to working with individual students, planning and preparing for the use of materials and community resources, participating in extraclass activities, contacting parents, public

¹Ibid., p. 66.

relations activities, conferences with the supervising teacher, participating in faculty committees and other experiences in the school and community which contribute to a balanced program of core teaching preparation.

The second phase of the program of instruction at Columbia University for preparation of core teachers is devoted to the foundations of education. Two courses are required in this area. The first deals with the fundamental purposes of education in a democracy. The second required course, "Psychology of Adolescence," attempts to help the prospective core teacher: (1) understand the processes of adolescent growth and maturation; (2) identify the interests of the adolescent; and (3) help him with techniques for studying student groups with which he will be working.

In the guidance phase of the program of instruction, two courses are included: (1) "Survey, Principles, and Procedures of Guidance," and "Introduction to Group Development and Guidance." The first course is designed to help the core teacher use guidance and counseling techniques in relating core course activities to the total growth and development of students. The second course attempts to help the core teacher develop skills in group work.

The elective phase of the program of instruction for core teaching at Columbia University constitutes an effort to help the core teacher broaden his own program of general education.

Programs for the pre-service preparation of core teachers such as the three in operation at the University of Minnesota,

Ohio State University and Columbia University, seemingly are making an attempt to develop the understandings, competencies, and abilities essential for the effective core teacher.

However, there is a need for in-service education as evidenced by the fact that most core classes have been and will continue to be staffed largely with subject-matter teachers.¹ Hence, a significant aspect of the preparation of core teachers is the in-service education program.

Various activities which may be included in an in-service program for core teachers are: course work, weekly conferences, curriculum committees, workshops, audio-visual materials, visitations to other schools, institutes at regular intervals in the school year, observations in classrooms with experienced teachers, self-evaluation, and attendance at professional meetings relating to the core programs.

The 1955 A.S.C.D. monograph suggests eight principles which may be incorporated in achieving an adequate program of in-service education for core teachers. Those principles cited include:

(1) An in-service education program for core teachers should at some time involve all teachers in the school--not just core teachers.

(2) An in-service education program for core teachers should be directed toward further development of the competencies needed at the pre-service level.

(3) An in-service education for core teachers should provide for a schedule permitting meetings on school time--e.g. for grade level department meetings, conferences, workshops, and institutes.

¹Faunce and Bossing, op. cit., p. 252.

(4) An in-service education program for core teachers should provide for the participation of lay people.

(5) An in-service program for the education of core teachers should be centered upon problems identified by the group concerned.

(6) An in-service program for core teachers should be focused upon the needs, problems, and interests of adolescents in this society.

(7) An in-service education program for core teachers should give consideration to the contribution of special services in an adequate core program.¹

With regard to the first principle to be used in developing an adequate program of in-service education, it seems clear that there are fundamental aspects of the core program which should be apparent to all teachers in a school system. For example, defining the function of the core program and the function of the special interest areas and the relationship of these programs to each other necessitates the cooperative effort of all teachers concerned.

In relation to the second principle, it should be noted that public schools and teacher education institutions may work together in offering and receiving constructive criticism of existing programs and utilize cooperative planning in discovering methods for overcoming these inadequacies.

The third principle, concerned with time allotments for meetings, relates to a significant aspect of the in-service program for core teacher education. Each activity included in such a program requires some amount of time, whether it requires ten

¹A.S.C.D., op. cit., pp. 91-95.

minutes or two weeks. Seemingly, better results may be achieved if a conscious effort is made to schedule in-service meetings on school time. This may be accomplished by scheduling classes so that all core teachers in a particular department have the same period free. Another suggestion would be that of core teachers arranging lunch hours at the same time so that they would have the opportunity to meet together for discussions relating to core activities.

The participation of lay people in the development of a core program may be helpful because laymen can: (1) suggest resources and/or serve as resource people; (2) help to identify adolescent needs; (3) evaluate the core program through various cooperatively defined techniques; and (4) interpret change to the public at large.

The fifth principle in developing an adequate program of in-service education for core teachers recognizes that such a program must be set up in terms of the teachers' own problems. Techniques which may be used to get teachers to identify their problems include: newsletters, questionnaires, conferences, suggestion boxes, and the use of a core coordinator within the school.

Since an adequate core program is based upon the common needs, problems, and interests of adolescents in this society, it should follow that an effective in-service program for core teachers should be focused upon finding techniques for identifying and meeting these needs. For example, a group of core teachers might prepare a needs study, that is, define a problem

area and find a solution for this problem in terms of the common needs of youth.

The contributions of special service areas such as health services, guidance and cafeteria services, custodial and maintenance departments, libraries and mental health clinics can be valuable in an in-service program for core teachers. The assistance provided by these services might include: librarians helping core teachers develop guides on how core classes might best use library services; county mental health agencies offering assistance in showing core teachers how to identify pupils with serious maladjustments; health education specialists cooperating with teachers in developing resource units emphasizing health information; and utilizing custodial and maintenance services in such units as "Living Together in Our School."

The aforementioned seven principles of providing an adequate program for the in-service education of core teachers may aid in the self-improvement of the teachers participating in the program. Support of this statement is given by Bossing and Faunce who have cited the following benefits accruing from one study of core teachers involved in in-service programs:

(1) Teachers became more active as participants and leaders in local and state committees, conferences, and workshops.

(2) Teachers wrote more for publication.

(3) Class groups became easier to work with; students were increasingly cooperative; the longer you worked in core the more fun it was.

(4) Teachers became more interested, more sympathetic, and more understanding of growth problems.

(5) Teachers became more skillful in planning and discussing with other teachers.

(6) Teachers had more creative experiences in common; they became more alert to world and local events and more aware of new materials and methods.

(7) Teachers became more active in research activities.

(8) Teachers became more interested in graduate study.

(9) Teachers observed needs of children more skillfully.

(10) Teachers became more capable at teaching discussion skills.

(11) Subject matter became more meaningful to teachers.¹

These eleven items present a well-rounded picture of the effective core teacher which can be achieved by pre-service education combined with an adequate in-service education program designed to develop competencies needed in effective core teaching.

EVALUATION OF THE CORE PROGRAM

A review of the literature pertaining to the evaluation of core programs revealed few evaluative studies attempted which were concerned with the effectiveness of such programs in the junior high school. According to Wright, more evaluative studies involving the type of program that uses the problem-solving approach in genuine problem situations should be made.²

¹Faunce and Bossing, op. cit., pp. 259-260.

²Grace S. Wright, "Ten Years of Research on the Core Program," School Review, December 1956, 64:399.

Because the question of the effectiveness of the core program in meeting its objectives merits prime consideration, the ensuing discussion is based on recommendations by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development concerning what criteria should comprise an evaluative study of core programs as well as the findings of two selected studies of particular core programs.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has made an attempt to assist persons interested in evaluating in several areas of behavior competence held significant as goals for general education.¹ The purpose of the A.S.C.D.'s study is to help determine the extent to which core programs are achieving four of the major goals implicit in general education:

(1) Developing skills and attitudes involved in critical thinking.

(2) Helping students develop consistent value systems.

(3) Establishing skills and understandings for social living.

(4) Fostering the fullest development of students' personalities.²

The Commission members hope to find what teaching-learning processes, resources, and organizing elements in the curriculum contribute most to achieving goals under study. While focusing its attention on the four areas mentioned, the A.S.C.D. recognizes that core programs should be evaluated continually along

¹Victor B. Lawhead, "Guidelines for Evaluating Core Programs," Educational Leadership, December 1960, 18:187.

²Loc. cit.

the traditional lines, i.e., on their effectiveness in helping adolescents achieve academic competence. In this respect, reviews of recent research involving comparative studies of core and departmentalized programs of general education indicate rather clearly that the more experimental programs are quite satisfactory.¹

In discussing pertinent research, Alberty concluded that "few significant differences in student achievement as measured by objective tests have been found between students in core programs and those in other types of curricular organization."²

Since most studies suggest that the comparative advantages of a core program over more departmentalized approaches are seen primarily in the realization of the behavioral goals of general education, the Commission is trying to establish guide lines for evaluating core programs in those respects.³

Joseph Jurjevich made a study of teaching methods employed in and learning experiences and outcomes of a three-year junior high school core program stressing guidance and the use of problem-solving techniques.⁴ In this particular core program prime consideration was given to the problems of youth in an effort to develop literate, mature, well-adjusted students, with subject

¹Ibid., p. 189.

²Alberty, op. cit., Encyclopedia of Educational Research, p. 339.

³Lawhead, op. cit., p. 189.

⁴Joseph C. Jurjevich, "Methods and Results in a Junior High Core Class," Educational Leadership, May 1957, 14:483-487.

matter and acquisition of factual knowledge being considered as means of achieving proficiency in the basic and social skills.

With the specific purpose of aiding the student with his problems, establishing rapport in the classroom, and contributing to the creation of a permissive atmosphere necessary for effective pupil-teacher planning and problem-solving situations, the following methods were employed in the program under consideration:

(1) Panels were used to discuss and give opinions on personal problems of individuals who cared to disclose them.

(2) Bibliotherapy or oral book reports dealing with troubles of young people served as a basis for discussions of such troubles.

(3) Personality charts were developed including traits which members of the study group felt necessary in a mature, well-adjusted, and well-liked junior high school student. Students used these charts to rate themselves.

(4) Sociodrama was used extensively to give students practice in meeting people in all types of social settings, as well as introducing themselves and others in a variety of situations.¹

In essence the classroom procedure in the core program selected by Jurjevich for study was an attempt to work in the areas of students' needs, interests, and problems in a context of social realities and to be consistent in the use of democratic methods. While the scope and sequence of study were established by staff planning, within the broad problem areas of study comprising the scope and sequence, units of works were the

¹Ibid., p. 484.

results of pupil-teacher planning. Units undertaken by this cooperative planning involved group methods and problem-solving techniques wherever possible.

Jurjevich's evaluation of the learning outcomes of the group under study was made through a comparison of the mean grade level achievement on standardized tests and the achievement was then compared with that of other homerooms of the same grade level in all of the city schools. It might be of interest to note that the study group was not a select one, rather it was heterogeneous in ability and the mean IQ was slightly below the test norm.

Comparisons were also made of the study group's achievement concerning academic and citizenship honor rolls, attendance, tardiness, failures, drop-outs, honors received, and participation in sports and other co-curricular activities.

An evaluation was made for each year the study group was in junior high school. This evaluation involved eleven other classes of each grade level in the city. In addition, a follow-up study was made for two and a half years of the senior high school experiences of 25 students who were in the ninth grade core class under study. In this follow-up study, achievements were compared to those of the entire sophomore, junior, and senior classes and, in some cases, they were compared with those of the entire senior high school population.

From comparisons in the junior high school, it was concluded by Jurjevich that the study group's academic and social achievement was as good as, and in some instances better than,

the mean achievement of all classes in their particular grade level of the school and city.

The follow-up study in senior high school evidenced that the study group's junior high school experience was as good as, or slightly better than, that which the average class in the city had had.

As a result of testing in the junior year of senior high school, it was shown that the mean I.Q. of the group under study was more than six points below the test norm. However, their mean achievement in academic areas was slightly above that of the entire junior class. With regard to achievement in social and school citizenship activities, the study group was usually up to or slightly above the average of all students in their class and school.

From his study, Jurjevich concluded:

The findings of the study seem to support the contention that the junior high school can be used for a period of experimentation and exploration stressing guidance and problem-solving techniques, and attempting to meet the needs, interests, and problems of youth. It is apparent that the study group suffered no ill effects in either their academic or social achievement in senior high school as a result of its junior high school experience.¹

Ned A. Flanders conducted a study comparing the effectiveness of English and social studies as opposed to a core program in developing basic skills.² Research for the study was carried

¹Ibid., p. 487.

²Ned A. Flanders, "English and Social Studies--or Core? Which for Better Basic Skills?" School Review, Autumn 1958, 66:351-360.

on in a three-year junior high school with an enrollment of 1300 students.

Students in the school studied were allowed to choose their program at the beginning of each year and were free to change from one program to another at that time. Thus, a student could enroll for a two-hour core class or for separate one-hour classes in English and social studies. During the three years in junior high school a student might have pursued any one of the following sequences:

(1) three years of one-hour classes in English and in social studies

(2) three years of core classes

(3) two years of core followed by one year of one-hour classes in English and in social studies

(4) one year of core followed by two years of one-hour classes in English and social studies

Each student in the study followed one of the above sequences.

Flanders sought to answer two questions in this study, namely:

(1) How did students in core classes score in basic communication?

(2) Did core students rate as high as students in conventional classes?¹

In an attempt to answer these queries, the achievement scores of students in the four groups were compared. Achievement scores in basic language skills were available because the regular testing program included administering the Iowa Every-Pupil Tests of Basic Skills at entrance to the seventh grade and

¹Ibid., p. 354.

again at the end of each school year. Tests in the Iowa battery yield scores on the following: reading comprehension and vocabulary; on map reading and use of graphs, references, indexes, and the dictionary; on punctuation, capitalization, English usage, and spelling. In addition, the test gives a composite score on total language skills. The regular school testing program also made available data on the students' mental ability as measured by the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Abilities Test.¹

In his study, Flanders made two separate analyses. The first covered three school years and compared the achievement of all four groups. The second analysis covered only the first two years and compared achievement in core groups with achievement in the non-core group.

In the three-year analysis, Flanders found the four groups showed no significant differences in use of references and graphs, English usage, and spelling on the scores of the Iowa tests. A multiple-range test based on the predicted and observed means for ninth grade revealed significant differences that favored the group with three years in the conventional program over the group with three years of core on all the remaining eight scores of the Iowa test scores. Comparing the scores of the straight core group with the scores of each of the groups that had followed a mixed core and non-core sequence, Flanders found significant differences favoring mixed groups in achievement in reading comprehension, vocabulary, use of index,

¹Ibid., pp. 354-355.

punctuation, capitalization, and total language skills. No significant differences were found in favor of the straight core sequence.¹

The second analysis, limited to a two-year period and including only the data on those students who had completed two years in either the conventional program or the core program at the end of the eighth grade, contradicted the findings of the three-year analysis.

In the two-year analysis, comparisons showed no significant differences in achievement in reading comprehension between core and non-core groups. Moreover, within the core group, in three out of four comparisons, students of below-average ability achieved more than did students of above-average ability. Girls of below-average ability achieved significantly more than girls of above-average ability in reading comprehension and in total language skills. Boys of below-average ability achieved significantly more in reading comprehension than did boys of above-average ability.²

Flanders felt the findings of the two-year study to be more acceptable on the basis of separate calculations of regression equations for students with intelligence quotients of 114 or higher and for students with intelligence quotients of 107 or lower in order to achieve greater control of differential rates of achievement.

¹Ibid., p. 356.

²Ibid., p. 358.

In conclusion, Flanders stated:

...students in core courses and students in conventional courses do not differ significantly in achievement in basic skills...The results of this study together with findings of other studies reviewed here indicate that in several independent situations achievement in core classrooms equaled or exceeded achievement in more conventional classrooms.¹

Evaluation of the core program is at best a difficult task, nor can the results of one evaluative study be projected to cover all core programs in existence. From the two studies presented here, it may be concluded that the core programs in these two cases have proved satisfactory in the respective junior high schools. However, it seems justifiable to conclude that each core program must be evaluated in terms of its own objectives. Hence, an overall evaluation of the core program has not been attempted.

SUMMARY

From an analysis of selected articles dealing with the core program in the junior high school, it is evident that the core, composed of type-problem-learning experiences to which all pupils should be exposed, is a method for achieving general education.

In an attempt to provide a sound program of general education to meet the needs of students at the junior high school level, the core program is the final step in a series of steps including: "required-subjects", correlation in teaching, fusion,

¹Ibid., p. 359.

and "broad-fields" centered around learning experiences in terms of life problems and needs of students.

From nation-wide studies made by the Office of Education and studies made within Alabama and Minnesota, it is evident that there is a definite trend toward increased use of block-time programs and that this increase in use is most marked at the junior high school level. Whereas only 9.7 percent of all junior and junior-senior high schools reported block-time classes in the 1949 study of the Office of Education, nine years later the percent had increased to 19.3. Moreover, 31.4 percent of separately organized junior high schools reported core programs in 1958, compared to 15.8 percent in 1949. In addition to showing an increasing growth of block-time courses, the 1958 study further evidenced a marked shift away from the subject-centered curriculum in the direction of the problem-centered curriculum based upon the personal and social needs of students at the junior high school level.

Core practices in four schools selected for review revealed a variety of approaches to implementing such programs throughout the United States.

With regard to education for core teaching, a review of the literature evidenced that the effective core teacher must develop competencies in providing leadership in the use of democratic processes, counseling and guidance, organizing and utilizing learning materials, and understanding the adolescent and helping meet his needs. In this regard, a number of colleges and universities have developed programs specifically designed

for the preparation of core teachers. Moreover, in-service education programs have become significant in the preparation of core teachers as evidenced by the fact that most core classes have been and will continue to be staffed largely with subject-matter teachers.

An overall evaluation of the core program was not attempted in this study because each core program must be evaluated in terms of its own objectives. In this regard, a need for more evaluative studies is evidenced. From two studies reviewed, it could be concluded that core programs in the respective studies have proved satisfactory in the two junior high schools.

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AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ARTICLES DEALING WITH
THE CORE PROGRAM IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

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The purpose of this report was to analyze selected articles dealing with the core program in the junior high school with regard to the following areas: (1) development and general characteristics; (2) status and trends; (3) core practices; (4) education for core teaching; and (5) evaluation of the core program.

Procedures used in this study included identifying the pertinent literature contained in the Kansas State University library by employing a bibliography, concerned with core programs, published by the U. S. Office of Education. With few exceptions, the available articles selected for analysis were recent publications dating between the years 1956 to 1960.

From an analysis of pertinent literature, it is evident that the core, composed of type-problem-learning experiences to which all pupils should be exposed, is a method for achieving general education.

In an attempt to provide a sound program for general education to meet the needs of students at the junior high school level, the core program is the final step in a series of steps including: "required-subjects", correlation in teaching, fusion, and "broad-field" centered around learning experiences in terms of life problems and needs of students.

From nation-wide studies made by the Office of Education and studies made within Alabama and Minnesota, it is evident that there is a definite trend toward increased use of block-time programs and that this increase in use is most marked at the junior high school level. Whereas only 9.7 percent of all junior and junior-senior high schools reported block-time

classes in the 1949 study of the Office of Education, nine years later the percent had increased to 19.3. Moreover, 31.4 percent of separately organized junior high schools reported core programs in 1958, compared to 15.8 percent in 1949. In addition to showing an increasing growth of block-time courses, the 1958 study further evidenced a marked shift away from the subject-centered curriculum in the direction of the problem-centered curriculum based upon the personal and social needs of students at the junior high school.

Core practices in four schools selected for review revealed a variety of approaches to implementing such programs throughout the United States.

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An overall evaluation of the core program was not attempted in this study because each core program must be evaluated in terms of its own objectives. In this regard, a need for more

evaluative studies is evidenced. From two evaluative studies reviewed, it could be concluded that core programs in the respective studies have proved satisfactory in the two junior high schools.